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SCIENCE

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FRIDAY, MARCH 18, 1898.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ELECTRICAL
SCIENCE. *

I.

CONTENTS:

<i>The Development of Electrical Science (I.):</i> PROFESSOR THOMAS GRAY	361
<i>The Province and Problems of Plant Physiology:</i> PROFESSOR D. T. MACDOUGAL.....	369
<i>The Mouth-parts of the Rhyngota:</i> PROFESSOR JOHN B. SMITH.....	374
<i>Thomas Jeffery Parker:</i> G. B. H.....	376
<i>A Commission of Public Health</i>	378
<i>Current Notes on Anthropology:—</i> <i>Can Sex be Distinguished in Skulls? The Earliest Italians:</i> PROFESSOR D. G. BRINTON.....	380
<i>Notes on Inorganic Chemistry:</i> J. L. H.....	380
<i>Scientific Notes and News:—</i> <i>The Fourth International Congress of Physiology; The Allegheny Observatory; The Biological Laboratory of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences; General</i>	382
<i>University and Educational News</i>	385
<i>Discussion and Correspondence:—</i> <i>The Longevity of Scientific Men:</i> J. MCK. C. STEPHEN H. EMMENS.....	386
<i>Scientific Literature:—</i> <i>Miron on Les huiles minérales; Gill's Handbook of Oil Analysis:</i> PROFESSOR S. F. PECKHAM. <i>Swingle Zur Kenntniss der Kern und Zelltheilung bei iden Sphacelariaceen; Strasburger's Das kleine botanische Practicum:</i> FREDERIC E. CLEMENTS. <i>Merrill's Stones for Building and Decoration:</i> R. H. T.....	389
<i>Societies and Academies:—</i> <i>The Entomological Society of Washington:</i> L. O. HOWARD. <i>The Philosophical Society of Washington:</i> E. D. PRESTON. <i>Biological Society of Washington:</i> F. A. LUCAS. <i>The Torrey Botanical Club:</i> EDWARD S. BURGESS	392
<i>Scientific Journals</i>	395

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In a brief discourse on the development of electrical science little time can be given to the early history of the subject. This part is more or less familiar to all the members of the Academy, and hence it may be passed over by only such brief reference as may serve to recall to mind the more important of the early discoveries. The early Greeks have recorded some elementary phenomena now known to be electric, and it is probable that such knowledge was not uncommon, though little noticed. It is only in comparatively recent times that scientific research has taken the place of superstition and attempts have been made to classify and find reasons for the existence of all natural phenomena.

Beginning with the 17th century, probably the first investigator worthy of notice in this subject was Gilbert, of Colchester, who published his work entitled 'De Magnete' in 1600. Gilbert made systematic experiments and showed that the property of attracting light bodies could be given to a large number of substances by friction. He also showed that the success of the experiment depended largely upon the dryness of the body. These experiments gave rise

* Address of the President delivered before the annual meeting of the Indiana Academy of Sciences on December 29, 1897.